GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4958
ANSWERED ON:20.12.2000
HARASSMENT OF SIKH PILGRIMS
SRINIVASULU KALAVA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 1500 strong Sikh Jatha which went to Nankana Sahib (Pakistan) on the eve of Gurupurab in November, 2000 has on its return alleged that Khalistan Militants roughed up members of the Jatha and Pakistan Police did not intervene;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it was alleged that Gurudwara at Nankana Sahib is being used by Militants under the ISI`s patronage; and

(d) if so, the Government reaction thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTENAL AFFAIRS(SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a) & (b) It has come to Government`s notice that on November 12, 2000 atGurudwara Nankana Sahib, some activists of the so-called Khalistan terrorist organisatins picked up a fight with the pilgrims visiting Nankana Sahib on the occasion of the Gurpurab celebrations. Six pilgrims, including one from the Indian Jatha, were injured in the fracas.

(c) & (d) Pakistan encourages so-called Khalistan terrorists and through them seeks to spread anti-India sentiment in members of the Sikh Jathas visiting Sikh shrines in Pakistan. They also seek to intimidate those who take exception to such propaganda.
According to information available with Government, during the main celebrations held at the Nankana Sahib (Pakistan) on November 11, 2000, leaders of several Pakistan-based terrorist groups such as the Khalistan commando Force (KCF), International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) were presentGovernment are also aware that Pakistan Present, Rafiq Tarar, also participated in the function, and reportedly presented `Siropas` to some of them.
Government are fully cognizant of Pakistan`s state sponsorship of cross-border terrorism in India, and support to groups that subscribe to obscurantist, violent and secessionist ideologies. Government remain firm in their resolve to take all necessary measures to preserve the security and territorial integrity of the country.